

Commissioner's Office

The department has made several important program adjustments in 2002 as a result of increased homeland security, the economy and the prolonged drought in Utah. The department has also built upon past successes in areas of clean water, marketing and food safety.

The threat of agri-terrorism and the possible introduction of a foreign animal disease into the United States make these issues top priorities for the department and its various divisions. The Division of Animal Industry was successful in obtaining federal funding to develop a mobile emergency response unit to respond to any animal disease emergency.

The department's Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) clean water program continues to expand in popularity with Utah ranchers. The incentive-based program continues to attract national praise from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of its emphasis on building partnerships with stakeholders rather than regulatory consequences. The program focuses on improving water quality by helping livestock owners better manage livestock waste.

Consumer protection in the area of weights and measures will benefit from an additional two compliance officers hired in 2003. The additional inspectors will help a team of 10 others to monitor the accuracy of the tens of thousands of retail checkout scanners, small scales and gasoline pumps.

Utah's lush tree stands remain virtually untouched by the potentially devastating effects of the Gypsy Moth. The division of Plant Industry's partnership with the U.S. Forest Services is held as a model for other states.

Laboratory analysis of pesticides, salmonella, E. coli and other contaminants of our food supply has been greatly streamlined by the introduction of computer based testing in the department's chemistry laboratory. Hazardous chemical-based testing is replaced with faster and more economical computer testing.

E-commerce and the Internet are helping consumers conduct business with the department swifter and more convenient. Consumers can now renew their various licenses with the department via the Internet. The breakthrough won the department the "Outstanding On-line Application" by Governor Leavitt.

The Drought

Few single events have impacted Utah agriculture as has the drought of 1998 - 2003. Many agricultural industries have been impacted by the exceptionally low water totals recorded during the past five years.

In response to the drought, the U.S. Department of Agriculture called on the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to distributing 16 million pounds of surplus non-fat dry milk as a feed supplement to qualified Utah livestock owners. The NDM program was offered to 10 Western states as drought relief by the

USDA. In Utah, more than 1300 owners of foundation cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats participated in the program.

Agriculture in the Classroom Program

United States agriculture provides a safe supply of food that frees the rest of us to concentrate on other activities such as medical research, space travel, computer technology, art, music, literature, philosophy, and recreation. Agriculture allows us to live differently in the US, and our youth need to know why. This is the mission of Utah Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC).

Utah AITC is part of a national effort designed to help students develop an awareness and understanding of our food and fiber system, and how agriculture affects our daily lives and our environment. Agriculture in the Classroom provides training and resources to classroom teachers to use agriculture as a vehicle to teach across existing, state required curriculum.

Utah students and teachers were recently part of an Oklahoma State University study to determine the agricultural knowledge of kindergarten through sixth grade students whose teachers had received AITC training compared with students whose teachers had not received AITC training. Results showed that Utah AITC trained teachers make a positive, significant difference in student understanding of agriculture. The study revealed that students taught by AITC trained teachers were most knowledgeable about agriculture in the following areas: Grades K-1 (Food, Nutrition, and Health); Grades 2-3 (Understanding Food and Fiber Systems); Grades 4-5 (Science, Technology, and Environment); and Grade 6 (History, Geography, and Culture). The study also indicated areas needing improvement. Students were least knowledgeable about agriculture in the following areas: Grades K-1 (History, Geography, and Culture) and Grades 2-6 (Food, Nutrition, and Health). Debra Spielmaker, Utah AITC Director says that this study "helps us to develop future AITC teacher training and directs us to areas for material development."

Public Information Office

The office of Public Information is an important link between the public, industry, employees, and the department. The office publishes various brochures, articles and newsletters as well as creates displays and computer presentations. The office also writes news releases and serves at times as spokesperson for the department.

During the past year, the PIO created public awareness campaigns for many of the department's activities such as homeland security, West Nile Disease, drought assistance programs, Mormon cricket and grasshopper control and national food safety month.

Kyle R. Stephens
Deputy Commissioner



The Public Information Office also interacts with local schools, offering students lessons on the connection between the farm and our food.

The PIO also coordinates the department's Critical Agricultural Land Conservation Fund which helps protect Utah farm and ranchland.

1000-Day Economic Plan

The department has identified numerous ways to work faster, higher and stronger following the 2002 Winter Olympics. The following is a condensed version of the department's 1000-day plan. Strategy #1 - Enhance Utah's life quality and economic viability. A safe food supply is the basis for health and prosperity. The department's mission is to "Protect and Promote Utah Agriculture and food." Food safety, public health and consumer protection is a critical and essential function of state government. In order to accomplish this mission, with increased population and industry growth, we are identifying ways and means to fund the regulatory functions of the department. In addition, we continue to educate the consuming public on the importance of agriculture and the value of maintaining a viable agriculture industry.

Strategy #2 - Invest in people. Utah has a well-educated and well-trained workforce and appropriate compensation is critical to maintain the expertise and knowledge base of highly trained employees.

Strategy #3 - Develop Utah as a center for technology investment, employment and entrepreneurship. The department will look at opportunities to utilize E-government and expand electronic services within department programs and adapt to new technological advancements in order to more effectively accomplish the mission of the department.

Milestones

The following are "milestone" achievements associated with the 1000-day plan.

Day 341 – January 10, 2003 The Utah Cattle Health Assurance Program (UCHAP) leads to six fold reduction in Trichomoniasis cases in year 2002 and plays a significant role in the department's Farm-to-Table disease intervention program and has qualified Utah to receive more than \$150,000 in federal funding for John's Disease control.

Day 351 – January 20, 2003 Participation in FDA Counter-Terrorism Food Emergency Response Network (FERN). It is a network of state and federal laboratories that are committed to analyzing food samples in the event of a biological, chemical, or radiological terrorist attack in this country. Federal partners are FDA, USDA, CDC, and EPA..

Day 394 – March 4, 2003: Wildlife Services trappers locate and remove two wolves near the Utah/Wyoming border following

depredation attacks on Utah sheep. WS trappers added to a multi-state 24/7 call out team because of their skills.

Day 404-- March 14, 2003: Two Utah Companies participated with UDAF at Foodex Food Show in Tokyo, Japan. Participating companies reported projected sales in the coming 12 months of \$1,250,000.

Day 409 – 19, 2003: Chemistry Laboratory reduces cost of groundwater sampling from \$9.50 per sample to \$2.25 per sample.

Day 422 –April 1, 2003: Utah Egg Quality Assurance Program (UEQAP) passes the two-year mark for significantly reduced numbers of Salmonella illness. Prior to 2001, the Department of Health was reporting over 300 cases per year, while in 2002 only 40 cases were reported, an 8-fold decrease that has been sustained over the last 2 years.

Day 450 – April 29, 2003: Information Technology team wins the State's Outstanding On-line Application award for the development of the first on-line license renewal system that contained the ability to also search for current licenses on file.

Day 452 -- May 1, 2003: Animal Feeding Operations assessment team inventoried 3,000th farm and ranch as UDAF works to improve groundwater quality in Utah, and prevent landowners from undergoing expensive permitting process with U.S. EPA.

Day 533 – July 21, 2003: Opening of Central Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Nephi, Utah. The laboratory serves as a primary line of defense to detect and prevent the spread of animal diseases. The laboratory is especially concerned with diseases that are transmissible from animals to man, and will employ technology to promote homeland security and deter bioterrorism.

Day 502 -- June 20, 2003 Utah ARDL Program booked over \$3 million in low interest loans to assist Utah farmers and ranchers address soil and water conservation objectives and leverage federal resources available through NPS 319, EQIP and other programs.

Day 513 — July 1, 2003: UDAF Groundwater Program tested its 1,955th rural water sample from across the state helping citizens determine water quality for culinary and agriculture uses.

Day 513 — July 1, 2003: Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) assessment team has identified 387 Potential CAFO's during statewide inventory and assessment campaign. Potential CAFO's are being provided technical and financial assistance to keep them out of the EPA's permitting process.

Day 544 — August 1, 2003: UDAF's Parallel Salinity Program, assisted Utah farmers and ranchers in improving irrigation systems to conserve water resources and reduce salt loads introduced into the Colorado River. Over 7,800 acres have improved irrigation systems in the Uintah Basin, Price River and San Rafael regions removing 32,800 tons of salt.